

APPROVED
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUES
MEETING MINUTES OF
February 23, 2009

TIME The meeting convened at 7:12 P.M.

PRESENT Chair Lord-Hausman, Commissioners Berger, Longley-Cook, Kirola, and Krongold.

ABSENT Vice-Chair Moore, Commissioners Fort and Kreitz

MINUTES

The January 26, 2009 minutes were approved with corrections to agenda item one under Old Business.

Chair Lord-Hausman introduced Darrell Handy, Risk Management for the City of Alameda who attended on behalf of Board Secretary Akil.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were no written communications.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Presentation by Design Community & Environment Consulting (Leslie Wilson, Consultant):

Discussion of accessibility issues regarding transportation in Alameda.

Leslie Wilson, Planner with Design Community & Environment (DCE) a Berkeley-based consulting firm, gave a presentation regarding a Community Based Transportation Plan (CBTP) for the City of Alameda. The plan is a grass roots effort to use community input to identify transportation problems, identify solutions, and collect information that can be put into a plan. The firm has also spent time with senior citizens, low-income groups and youth groups for input. Ms. Wilson requested that the Commissioners complete a survey regarding the proposed plan.

Chair Lord-Hausman asked how the program began to which Ms. Wilson responded that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) funded Community Based Transportation Plans for several cities in the Bay Area. DCE completed a CBTP for Oakland, Berkeley and Rosemont and now Alameda. DCE is working with various transportation agencies as well as conducting most of the outreach and compiling data for inclusion into the plan. This effort will ensure more funding to prioritize problems and get solutions. Ms. Wilson said that if you live on the main Island, it would be nice to know places where you live, places that you go, places that you or somebody that has disabilities would have issues getting to, and she will complete the map.

Ms. Wilson provided a map of the City and asked Commissioners to identify problems regarding

problem areas and accessibility issues for individuals with disabilities.

Chair Lord-Hausman clarified that it is anything that would get in the way of accessibility to which Ms. Wilson responded sidewalks, access to a bus, a shelter at a bus stop and streets that are poorly lit or dark.

Chair Lord-Hausman responded anything that would get in the way of accessibility at any level to which Ms. Wilson replied yes and the survey includes discussion of general transportation, destinations, as well as rating experience on AC Transit, the ferry, BART, Paratransit, sidewalks and bicycle routes.

Commissioner Longley-Cook stated that there is no access to 9th Street from Portola which dead-ends. To which Ms. Wilson stated that when completing the survey, the more precise that you can be in talking about the intersections or the bus routes that you have a problem with, the more helpful it would be for the plan.

The Commission identified several problem areas, including Webster, entrance to the Tube, College of Alameda, Ralph Appezato Parkway, Central, traveling East on Clement along the lane that comes right through the railroad tracks at Clement and Park. The Commission also pointed out that the railroad tracks make walking and bicycling difficult, and there are many unused railroad tracks in Alameda.

Ms. Wilson requested that the Commission discuss AC Transit Services for people with disabilities, including getting on and off buses.

The Commission pointed out that you have to climb up very high steps to get onto a bus and if you are a senior or have any type of disability that is very difficult to do. There are individuals who believe that bus drivers do not want to stop and deal with a person in a wheelchair and just drive by. Buses have a very narrow isle and they barely can hold able people, so if you are semi-disabled, it can be troubling. The Commission indicated it is important for people to understand that there are invisible disabilities and that bus drivers need better training, including sensitivity training for those individuals. There also needs to be adequate bus shelters, with seats easy to manage, spaces for wheelchairs and even a GPS so they can track how far away a bus will be and announce every approaching street, which can be helpful. Also, streets need to be well-lit around residential neighborhoods.

Chair Lord-Hausman stated that she would like to see the Lincoln and Park Street intersection redesigned at some point, because there are a lot of people that turn left there and it is a wide intersection. An elderly or disabled person walks more slowly and people that turn left there are so busy trying to make their left turn that they are not paying attention to pedestrians in the crosswalk. That area is getting busier because of the library, lots of retail, service shops as well as increased traffic coming into the City off the Fruitvale and Park Street Bridges.

Darrell Handy, City of Alameda Risk Manager, stated that he was previously Risk Manager for AC Transit. One of the reasons why drivers are reluctant to stop for wheelchairs is that their

bosses and the time schedules never allow them enough time, and they get disciplined if they are late. The system is such that by doing what is right and what they would like to do conflicts for fear that they may lose their job. AC Transit is very strict about keeping the timetables.

Commissioner Longley-Cook discussed the frequency of buses at Alameda Point to which Chair Lord-Hausman stated that there is a lot of low income housing there and only one bus. This is difficult on the weekend and that has been identified as a major problem for the disabled veterans and low-income families. There is also going to be a lot more housing soon, and one bus route is inadequate.

Commissioner Longley-Cook pointed out that there are drainage and water flow problems near the tube and the Mariner Square Athletic Club.

Ms. Wilson asked the Commission to identify, as a resident or as a person speaking on behalf of people with disabilities, what would be three major priorities of improvement, or problems or areas that need work.

The Commission identified AC Transit sensitivity training, changes to AC Transit including the distance between bus stops; intersection design and pedestrian safety issues.

Chair Lord-Hausman asked Ms. Wilson if she is aware that the City has a Youth Advisory Commission to which Ms. Wilson responded, yes and confirmed that DCE met with them a couple of weeks ago. They completed a plan with the Transportation Commission, which highlighted congestion in High School.

Ms. Wilson thanked the Commission for their input and stated they are hoping to complete the plan by late spring.

Chair Lord-Hausman thanked Ms. Wilson on behalf of the Commission.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Special Need-Special Services Resource Fair (Commissioners Krongold/Kreitz):**
Discuss Special Need-Special Services Resource Fair.

Commissioner Krongold gave an update on the work group meeting and provided specific highlights from that meeting, including the date planned for October 24 at the Officer's Club, confirmed partnerships with Mastick Senior Center, Alameda Hospital, CERT, and American Red Cross. The majority of the work group meeting was spent brainstorming a list of service organizations for profit providers that could be donors or sponsors for the event. Commissioner Krongold stated she created an Excel spreadsheet that was emailed to everybody in the work group and would provide copies to the Commission for next month's meeting.

Chair Lord-Hausman stated that a Resource Fair Overview has been sent to Board Secretary Lucretia Akil for review by City staff and we are waiting for approval.

Chair Lord-Hausman commended Commissioner Krongold for all of the work that she has done on the Resource Fair, adding that it is moving ahead really well. The main challenge is the location, as there has to be a balance between space, central location and accessibility. There is no other central location that has the kind of accessibility and space that the O'Club offers. The Commission will have to do a really good job of publicity.

Commissioner Berger asked about a school location to which Commissioner Krongold replied parking would be an issue on a Saturday.

Chair Lord-Hausman stated there would be additional issues, including janitorial service, and whether or not AUSD would be willing to donate that. The Special Olympics uses the Alameda High School gym a lot, although Encinal High School has more parking, which can be discussed at a later date. The O'Club also has tables and chairs.

Commissioner Krongold stated that Ms. Cheryl Fenner Brown, who teaches at Serendipity Yoga, is trained to work with people with disabilities and will offer a chair yoga class at the Fair, which will take place in a separate space from the tables due to the layout of the O'Club.

Chair Lord-Hausman said that everyone is invited to attend the March 9th group to which Commissioner Krongold confirmed that it will be in the library at 6:30 P.M., in Room A, the Community Room right near the Café.

2. Commission Disability Internet Webpage (Chair Lord-Hausman/Secretary Akil):

Update regarding the addition of an accessibility page onto the City's website.

Chair Lord-Hausman stated that she received the Internet webpage sample based on the meeting with the City's IT staff and consultant and it looked pretty good. There has been no recent follow up but the project is moving along.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

There was no staff communications.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/NON-AGENDA ITEMS

1. Commissioner Longley-Cook attended the Transportation Commission meeting and stated that there is going to be a discussion regarding the 51-bus route. No other action was taken.
2. Chair Lord-Hausman stated the City has just finalized the Bicycle Plan Task Force, which Commissioner Kreitz has been a member. During that time, there were no scheduled meetings, until the two meetings scheduled in March that will include working on the Bicycle Master Plan. Commissioner Kreitz has also tendered her resignation due to heavy schedule with work and a number of different things going on for her. She will no longer be on that task force. Chair Lord-Hausman stated that she does not know how strongly the Commission feels that there should be someone on the task force and asked if anyone would like to be? If

there is not a representative, the Commission will continue to get notifications from them and should something be of interest, someone from the CDI can go attend or communicate in writing.

Commissioner Longley-Cook stated that they do report to the Transportation Commission as part of their meeting with the Bike Task Force.

Chair Lord-Hausman stated that everyone should be aware of people with disabilities on bicycles.

3. Chair Lord-Hausman received notice that the Miracle League is having a walk-run fundraiser on Saturday March 21st called "St. Paddy's Day Dash." It is a three-mile fun run-walk along the Alameda Beach and all proceeds go to the Alameda Miracle League. It starts at 9:00 A.M and they may like to have volunteers. The web site is Alamedadmiracle.org.
4. Chair Lord-Hausman stated that she had discussed the Resource Fair with an able-bodied individual walker in her 70s, who indicated that she would like a psychologist to be included in the fair resources, where an individual can talk to that person about how to talk to someone with a disability in a sensitive manner. Commissioner Krongold responded that it sounds like sensitivity training to which Chair Lord-Hausman stated that we would definitely look for an appropriate person.

Chair Lord-Hausman also stated that she informed a few individuals that there are some openings on the Commission as there is a need for more people. Some people might shy away because they may not have a disability or feel right about serving on the CDI, which is not the case. Individuals with sensitivity or openness are the type of people the CDI is looking for. Chair Lord-Hausman stated that the name of the Commission might be off-putting and suggested a name change to "Commission on Disability Access." Although, the City may not be responsive to the name change and suggested discussion on this item for another meeting date.

5. Chair Lord-Hausman stated that there is a wonderful article in the NY Times on Universal Design that specifically discusses changing the word disability to difference.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is Monday, March 23, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucretia A. Akil, Commission Secretary